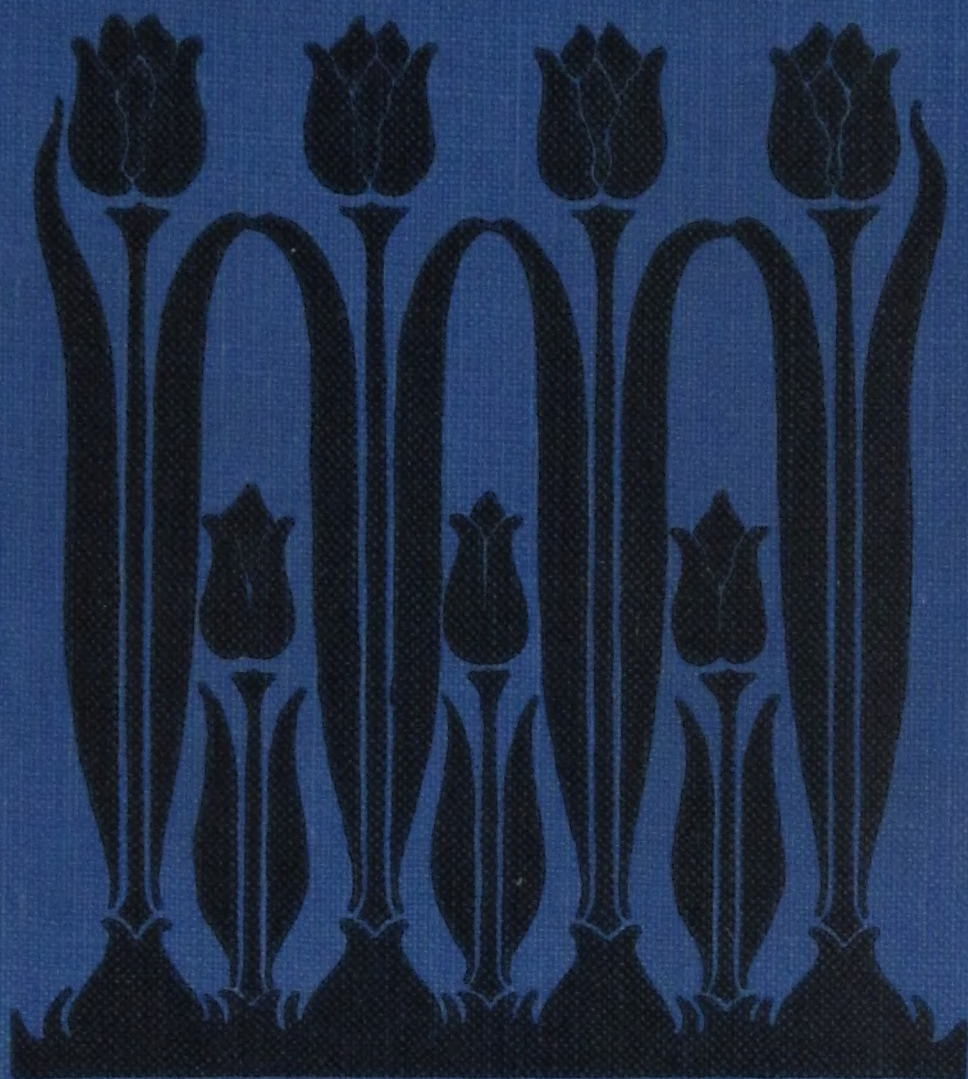


STORIES OF THE STARS

BY INEZ N. McFEE



F. A. OWEN PUBLISHING COMPANY,
DANVILLE, N. Y.



INSTRUCTOR LITERATURE SERIES

Stories of the Stars

BY

Inez N. McFee



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TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.

When the blazing sun is gone,
When he nothing shines upon,
Then you show your little light,
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.

Then the traveler in the dark
Thanks you for your tiny spark:
He could not see which way to go,
If you did not twinkle so.

In the dark blue sky you keep,
And often through my curtains peep;
For you never shut your eye,
Till the sun is in the sky.

As your bright and tiny spark
Lights the traveler in the dark,
Though I know not what you are,
Twinkle, twinkle, little star.

—*Jane Taylor.*

Stories of the Stars

“Silently one by one in the infinite meadows of
heaven
Blossomed the lovely stars, the forget-me-nots of
the angels.”

How often you have watched them! And how
often, too, have you murmured softly to yourself:

“Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!”

Let me tell you. The stars are suns. Suns?
Yes, indeed. Astronomers tell us that our sun is
a star, and that it is not nearly so bright as many
of those which shine over our heads at night.
But they are so very far away that their splendid
light seems to us but a mere twinkle. We shall
have more to say of this later.

The stars are always in the sky and we might
see them every day but for the sun. If you will
light a candle and note how feeble its light is in
the day time, you will understand at once how
the bright light of the sun overcomes the light of
the stars.

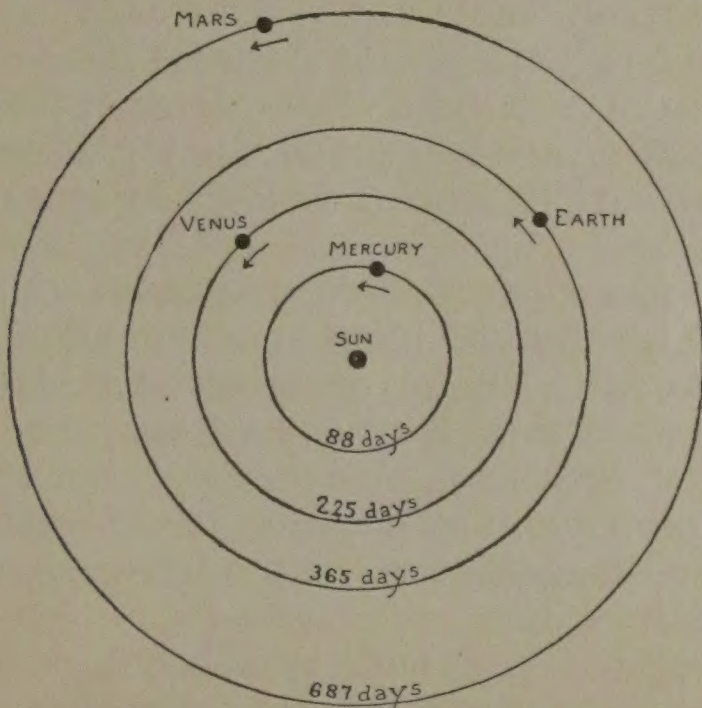
The sun is our nearest star. If you could stand
upon one of the bright stars which we see in the
heavens, and look towards our sun, you would be
surprised to find how dim and insignificant it
looks. It would appear as a small star, if, in-

deed, you were able to see it at all. And you might also be able to discover something which scientists have wondered and speculated about a great deal—Are there planets circulating around the other suns, such as circulate around ours? But, mind you, if you stood on any one of the stars and looked toward our sun, you would see nothing of our planetary system. No, indeed. Not even if you had at your command a telescope a thousand times more powerful than any that are now known.

I wonder if you know anything about our *planetary system*—the bodies, or possibly worlds, called planets which circulate about our sun. Their story properly belongs in another tale, but we feel that we must really give you a hint of them. Else how are you going to realize the great magnitude of the heavens? For we want you, as you gaze at the stars, to think how marvelous indeed is the great universe spread out before you.

Let us then glance for a moment at our planetary system. Besides our earth there are seven planets of considerable size and a whole host of insignificant little ones which depend upon the sun. They all revolve about him, and derive their light and heat from his beams. In a good many ways these planets resemble the earth and one of them, Venus, is about the same size. Mercury and Mars are much smaller, but Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune are a great deal larger. The nearest of these is millions of miles away and naturally but little is known concerning them, though people have known of their existence for ages. The ancients named the days of the week from the first five, and the sun and moon.

You will perhaps like to make a drawing of our planetary system, in order to give you an idea of how it appears. Here is the way Prof. Ball, in his book *Star-land*, says to draw the "Four Inner Planets" which are the ones nearest to us and to the sun: "First open the compasses one inch, and then describe a circle. On this circle place a dot and mark in neat letters, 'Mercury,' and also write on the circle '88 days.' At the center you are to show the 'Sun.' This circle gives the track followed by Mercury in its journey round the sun in the period of 88 days. Next open your compasses to 1 3-4 inches, which you must do accurately by the scale. The circle drawn with this radius shows the relative size of the path of Venus, and to indicate the periodic time, you should mark it "225 days." The next circle you have to draw is a very interesting one. The compass is to be opened 2 1-2 inches this time,



THE ORBITS OF THE FOUR INNER PLANETS

and the path that it makes is to be marked '365 days.' This shows the high road along which we ourselves journey every year, along which we are, indeed, journeying at this moment. * * * The compass must now open to four inches, and a circle which represents the orbit of Mars is then to be drawn. We mark on this '687 days,' and the inner part of the solar system is then fully represented."

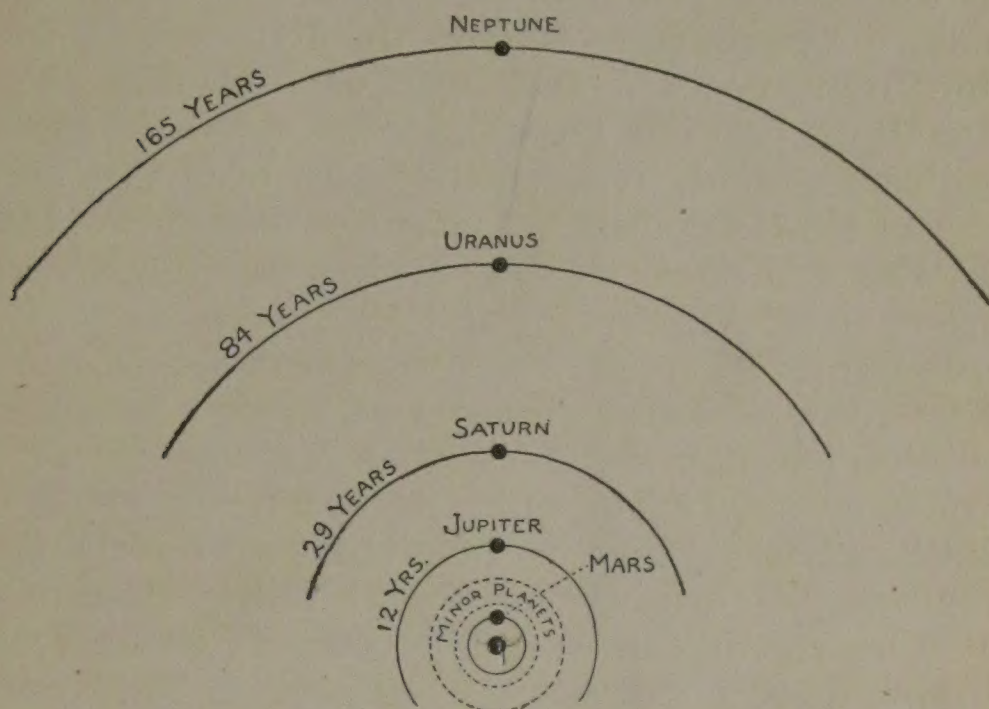
The completed drawing will look like the one on preceding page, only, of course, our scale is not so large as Prof. Ball directs.

Mercury is 37,000,000 miles from the sun. The earth is 93,000,000 miles. The great planets Jupiter, Saturn, and Uranus are much farther. Jupiter takes twelve years to go around the sun; Saturn 29 1-2 years; Uranus, 84 years; and Neptune, 165 years. Jupiter, the largest of the planets, is 1200 times larger than the earth. Of course these planets are so far from the sun that they get but little benefit from its light and heat. "But," says Prof. Ball, "The gloom of their situation seems to matter but little, for it is highly improbable that any of these bodies can be inhabited."

So much for our planetary system. Now look up at the stars and imagine each one of them to be a sun, with their corresponding planets dependent upon them! Of course, we do not know positively that such planets exist, but it is altogether probable, and it aids us in realizing the extent and magnificence of the universe in which we are situated.

I wonder if you have ever been told to count the stars when you could not go to sleep? If you

ever tried it, I am sure you soon wearied of the utter hopelessness of the task. But it no doubt gave you an idea of the great multitude of stars which may be seen from your part of the world.



THE ORBITS OF THE FOUR GIANT PLANETS

If you were to go to the equator and stay there for one year, carefully counting the stars each night, you might enumerate about 6000, for here all the stars in the heavens are successively exposed to view. This count of 6000 would be stars that might be seen with the naked eye. If you were to use an ordinary opera glass, the number might be increased twenty times. For the heavens teem with many stars so far away that their rays of light are not discernible with the naked eye. There are also many stars which only the most powerful telescopes can discern.

Alpha Centauri, the star nearest us, is estima-

ted to be more than two and one half trillion miles away. Of course, you have no idea how far that is. If you should count two every second, and continue this ceaselessly, day and night, it would take you over 40,000 years to count that sum. Astronomers reckon the distances of stars by "light years," and it takes over four years for light, which travels at the rate of 186,300 miles a second, to reach the earth from this star.

But this is not all. Listen! "When we look at the star now we see it as it was three years previously. In fact, if the star were to go out altogether, we might still continue to see it twinkling for a period of three years longer, because a certain amount of light was on its way to us at the moment of extinction, and so long as that light keeps arriving here, so long shall we see the star showing as brightly as ever. When, therefore, you look at the thousands of stars in the sky tonight, there is not one that you see as it is now, but as it was years ago.

"Among the stars which we can see with our telescopes, we feel confident there must be many from which the light has expended hundreds of years, or even thousands of years, on the journey. When, therefore, we look at such objects, we see them, not as they now are, but as they were ages ago; in fact, a star might have ceased to exist for thousands of years, and still be seen by us every night as a twinkling point in our great telescopes.

"Remembering these facts, you will, I think, look at the heavens with a new interest. There is a bright star, Vega or Alpha Lyrae, a beautiful gem, so far off that the light from it which now reaches our eyes started before many of my au-

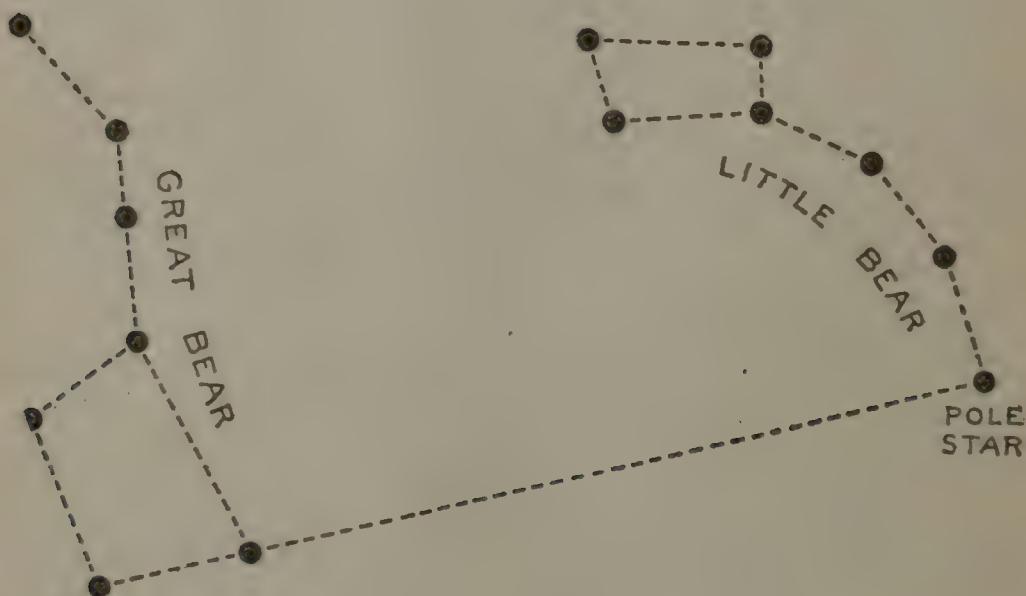
dience were born. Suppose that there are astronomers residing on worlds amid the stars, and that they have sufficiently powerful telescopes to view this globe, what do you think they would observe? They would not see our earth as it is at present, they would see it as it was years, and sometimes many years, ago. * * * * There can be no doubt that there are stars so far away that the rays of light which started from the earth on the day of the battle of Waterloo are only just arriving there. Farther off still, there are stars from which a bird's-eye view could be taken at this very moment of the signing of Magna Charta. There are even stars from which England, if it could be seen at all, would now appear, not as the great England we know, but as a country covered by dense forests, and inhabited by painted savages, who waged incessant war with wild beasts that roamed through the island. * * * * Indeed, if we could view our own earth reflected from mirrors in the stars, we might still see Moses crossing the Red Sea, or Adam and Eve being expelled from Eden."

In observing the stars you have, no doubt, noticed that they differ in brightness and color. Some stars are white, some are yellow, some are tinged with red, while others seem to be blue or green. Some stars twinkle while others give a steady light. They are scattered about here and there without any regard to order. Certain groups or clusters, called constellations, were long ago named by the ancients for the purpose of better distinguishing them. These names were for the most part given because of their fancied resemblance to certain figures. Thus, we have

the dipper, the seven sisters, the swan, the lion, and many others. All of these are enshrouded in myth and fanciful legend.

THE GREAT BEAR AND THE LITTLE BEAR

These constellations are familiar to all, though you may perhaps speak of them as "The Big Dipper" and "The Little Dipper." Doubtless, too, you have heard that long ago, before the mariner's compass came into use, the first group of stars pointed out to the sailors the Pole Star, which served to guide their course at night. But have you heard the legend concerning the two bears?



It seems that long ago, in a certain land across the sea, there was a dense forest where sportsmen loved to hunt. Among the wild animals which they sought was a white bear that was most tan-

talizing. It had a habit of appearing suddenly from who knows where and disappearing again mysteriously before the excited hunter could bring his weapon to bear upon it. Many hunters tried to get it. They wanted to put it in the sacred temple.

Finally a very young hunter started out for the forest, and said he would not return until he had secured the bear. No one made much ado about his going, for he had no mother to yearn over and care for him, as she had disappeared most strangely and unaccountably when he was but a small child. Since that time he had made his home with his uncle, and often, as he grew to manhood, had he made long trips searching for his mother.

In company with the young man were six friends, all eager to bring home the bear. They promised each other that the one who first saw it should call to the others. Now, it transpired that before they had gone many paces into the forest the young man, who was the leader, fired at a beautiful, bright-plumaged bird. As he did so, he heard a low moan at his side, and behold! the white bear crouched near with eyes filled with almost human love and anguish. In some unaccountable manner the arrow aimed at the bird had struck the heart of the bear.

The young man gave a glad shout to his companions, and sprang from his horse. But imagine his surprise when the beautiful bear cried out joyously: "Oh, my boy," and fell on the ground at his feet! Immediately he knew that the creature was his mother, and that she had been changed by the gods into the form of a bear.

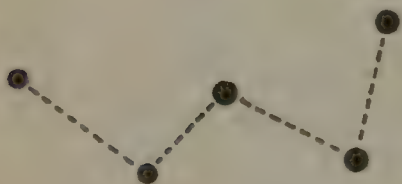
"Oh, mother," he cried, "forgive me, forgive me!" and he sank at her side, with his arms clasping her neck.

His friends came quickly and found instead of one bear, two white bears lying clasped together on the ground. They looked about in vain for the young man. Then they attempted to carry the two bears home. But lo! as they raised them from the ground, a flash of lightning burst from the sky and carried the bears away to the heavens.

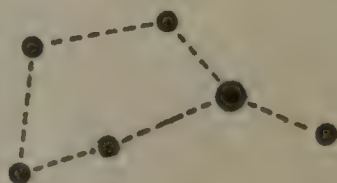
Jupiter, the young man's father, had borne him and his mother into the sky to live with him, and there they can be seen on any clear, starry night.

THE SEVEN SISTERS

This is a beautiful constellation, and one which you have perhaps seen many times. You only saw six stars? Well, that is all any mortal has seen! Some legends say that the seventh sister



CASSIOPEIA



SEVEN SISTERS

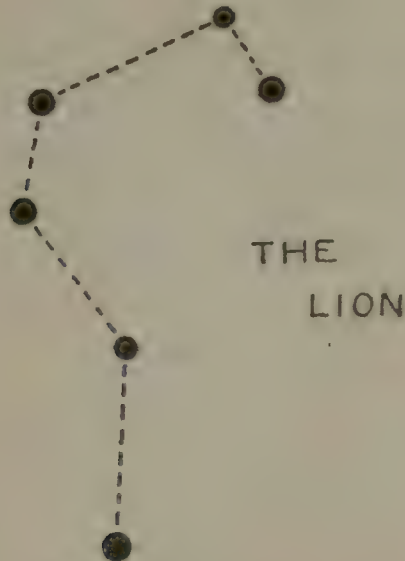
once hid herself in fear behind the others when a terrible battle was raging upon the earth. Others tell how this seventh one fell in love with a mortal and gave up her high position in the heavens to dwell with him upon the earth.

All the sisters once dwelt upon the earth, you know. They were very beautiful and so devoted to each other that they were always together. Orion, the hunter, was greatly attracted by their beauty and devotion and pursued them everywhere, until at last their father Jupiter heard them pleading to be delivered from him, and caught them up into the sky out of reach of all harm.

THE LION

It takes a considerable stretch of the imagination to see the head and shoulders of a lion in the sickle-shaped constellation known by this name. Yet such it is!

We are told that it is the very lion which Hercules captured. You remember that among the



twelve great tasks set for him by his uncle was the slaying of an enchanted lion, whose hide was so tough that no arrow could pierce it. Hercules,

of course, knew nothing of this, but the uncle did.

The brave youth shot all his arrows in vain, and then courageously rushed upon the lion, seized him by the jaws, and drove a heavy club down his throat. Then,

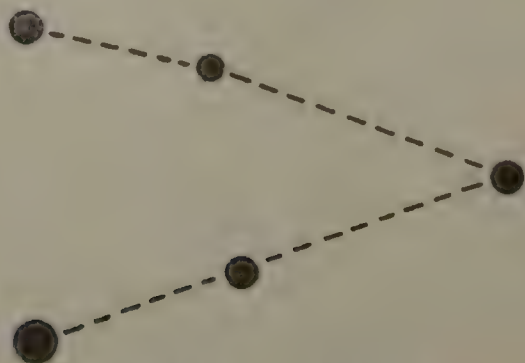
“The lion huge, whose tawny hide
And grinning jaws extended wide,
He o’er his shoulders threw,”

—*Euripides*.

and homeward trudged to give the creature’s carcass to his uncle. But Eurystheus was so frightened at the sight of the huge monster that he would have none of it, and the gods caught the lion up into the sky.

THE BULL

Here, again, considerable imagination is needed to recognize the head of the milk white bull which carried away the princess Europa. If you look carefully, perhaps you may be able to note, not far from the Seven Sisters, five stars arranged in a V shape, with a very bright star at the top in the supposed position of the bull’s eye.



THE BULL

But do you know the story of Europa? It runs something like this:—

Long ago a certain beautiful princess and her brothers were making daisy chains in a meadow bordering upon the sea shore. All at once a lovely white bull came up to them and begged to be petted. The maiden delightedly stroked and patted him and finally decked him with bright garlands of flowers. Then, when the bull knelt as though asking her to mount, she sprang gayly upon his back. But her gay laughter soon turned to piteous cries of fear. For no sooner was she safely seated upon the bull's back than the creature ran swiftly away and sprang into the sea, where he soon swam from sight.

The poor frightened little boys gazed after their sister in sad bewilderment, powerless to aid her. For many long months her frightened cries rang in their ears, but they never saw her again.

People believed that Jupiter had sent the white bull to carry the maiden away. And shortly afterward when some of the knowing ones saw the bull in the sky they were quite certain that it must be the one which had stolen Europa.

ORION

This constellation is the glory of the winter skies. It may be seen not far from the Bull, and is known by the three bright stars in its "Belt," which occupies the middle of a large quadrangle of still brighter stars. Many stories are told concerning Orion. Here is one which we pasted in a scrap book long ago. Mara L. Pratt is, I believe, the author:—

“The goddess of the Moon had fallen deeply in love with Orion, the mighty hunter. Now her brother, the god of the Sun, did not approve of Orion at all, and like many little brothers now-a-days, thought it his sister’s business to be governed in all things by his taste. The Moon goddess did not think so; and as she would not obey her brother by throwing aside Orion, he resolved to destroy him. Soon an opportunity came. As Orion was bathing in the sparkling waters, the Sun god sent his brightest rays upon him, causing him to shine like a piece of gold in the water.



“Then calling his sister to him he said, “See, dear sister, that spot of golden sunlight in the water. Let us send our arrows upon it!” The Moon goddess, glad always to try her skill at arrows with her brother, bent her bow at once.

Her aim was swift and sure. Orion sank, pierced through the head by the arrow of his much loved goddess.

"When she learned what she had done, she was wild with grief. She begged Jupiter to give back Orion's life. But Jupiter could not do that. So, pitying her grief, he lifted him up into the sky, that the Moon goddess may look upon him as she goes sailing by at night in her beautiful chariot.

OTHER CONSTELLATIONS

"The Ram, the Bull, the heavenly Twins,
And next the Crab, the Lion shines
The Virgin, and the Scales;
The Scorpion, Archer, and Sea-goat,
The Man that holds the water-pot,
And Fish with glitt'ring tails."

And countless more may be enumerated among the constellations which form the "pictures in the sky." But we have not space to tell of them here. Let us hope that some day you will be the owner of a good star-atlas, such as Proctor's or Keith Johnson's, and a good telescope. Then you can map out for yourself a "personally conducted" tour in the heavens, and get acquainted with the stars. But do not imagine that you must put off locating the stars until that happy day arrives. No indeed.

To begin with, we will suppose that you are familiar with the Great Bear or Dipper. (If not, you can easily get some older person to point it out for you.) If you follow in a straight line the two stars forming the "front" of the dipper,

called "the Pointers," you may readily locate the Pole Star. "This is the most important star in the heavens to astronomers," says the author of *Star-land*. "because it happens to mark very nearly the position of the Pole on the sky. You will easily note the peculiarity of the Pole Star if you will look at it two or three times in the course of the night. It will appear to remain in the same place in the sky, while the other stars change their places from hour to hour."

The constellation of the Dipper will also serve to locate for you the Little Bear and the beautiful constellation known as Cassiopeia, five stars forming the letter W. (See Fig. 3.) An imaginary line drawn from the Pole Star over the end of Cassiopeia and "as far again" will lead you to The Great Square of Pegasus. A line drawn at a slight angle down from the other side of the W will reach Perseus, in one of the "richest parts of the heavens." You are now in the path of the Milky Way, and surrounded with stars innumerable. But we must mention only one more of them, Aldebaran, the Bull's eye, which you may find by carrying your slanting line on down from Perseus. It is a ruddy star of the first magnitude, and the key to the location of many near-by constellations which we have mentioned. But really we must leave you to discover these on your own "personally conducted" tour!

THE MILKY WAY

The Milky Way, or Jacob's Ladder, is a broad track of faint light which may plainly be seen stretching across the heavens on a clear night.

It consists of myriads of stars so small and faint that we can not distinguish one from the other and only note the glow produced from their collective rays.

The Russians have a beautiful legend concerning the Milky Way. It seems that soon after the world was created, a beautiful queen, named Lindu, was given charge over all the birds. She was so kind and patient and exercised her trust in such a charming manner that all the heavenly hosts fell in love with her and many of them sought to win her for a bride.

Among the first of her suitors was the North Star, who drove up, laden with presents, in a grand coach and six. "Will you come and shine beside me, beautiful Lindu?" he questioned eagerly. "Nay, my friend," replied Lindu gently. "You must always stay in one place. I could not be happy in your watch tower, for I love to roam about."

Scarcely had the North Star gone before the Moon drove up in his splendid silver coach, drawn by ten fine horses. He laid twenty beautiful gifts before the queen and begged her to come with him. But Lindu would not, because said she, "You change your face too often and not your path. I could never journey through life with you." So the Moon put on his saddest face and drove away.

Next came the Sun in his golden chariot, drawn by twenty wonderful horses with diamond eyes. Lindu was almost dazzled with his grandeur and the costly presents which he brought, yet she would not go with him. "No," she said, "you are much too brilliant for me. Then, too, you

are like my friend, the Moon, you run in the same track. I love the time when the birds fly North and South, and I like to wander here and there with them. No, I could not go with you."

Then came the Northern Light from his home in the Land of Midnight. "I hear you love change, sweet Lindu," said he. Surely I am changeable enough to suit you! I never am long in one place. Come journey about with me! You shall go or rest as you please. Each time you set out you shall have a new gown, a new coach, and new horses."

Ah, this sounded attractive, and Lindu gazed at the beautiful Northern Light, in his diamond coach drawn by a thousand white horses, with distinct favor in her eyes. "I should like that!" she cried. "Yes, I will go with you. But not now, you must give me time to provide for my birds and make ready."

So the Northern Light returned to his home, promising to come again soon for his bride. Lindu was very happy and went about singing blithely and wearing such a happy face that all her friends rejoiced with her, and vied with each other in bringing her beautiful things for her trousseau. The Mountain Torrent sent her an elegant bridal veil. The Frost King brought her some lovely lace patterns. The birds brought some wonderful robes, softer than silk and more beautiful than velvet. While certain other friends brought her some sandals fashioned like the wings of a bee and fleetier than a deer's foot. At last she was ready. But the bridegroom did not come. The birds came back from the South, flowers bloomed and waned, the leaves fell, and the earth

was locked once more in the grasp of the Frost Giants. Still there was no sound of the Northern Light's fleet-footed steeds.

Then Lindu gave up in despair and cried until all the little brooks of the earth became rushing torrents. In vain her friends and her birds strove to comfort her. She heeded them not. Finally, wearying of her inattention, the birds flew away and made homes for themselves wherever they listed. But not until they had lifted up their voices and cried to their father to pity Lindu. And Jupiter graciously heard their pleadings. He ordered his four winds to lift her up into his sky palace. And here she dwells today, supremely happy in her fleecy white robes and bridal veil.

THE EVENING STAR

This is the bright star which you see in the west just after sunset. Venus is evening star during most of the year. It was named after Venus the goddess of love and beauty, whom Paris gave the charming present of a most beautiful little golden apple, as the prize for being the most beautiful of all the lovely goddesses.

"This goddess," according to an old legend, "was supposed to have sprung from the foam of the sea. One day the sea nymphs discovered her seated in her chariot formed of a pearl shell, and drawn by snow white swans, her favorite birds. They entrusted her to the care of Zephyrus, the soft south wind, who blew a gentle breeze and wafted her to the ruby gates of the western sky which opened to receive her and she passed through to the world of the gods. Whenever she

wished to return to the earth she came in her tiny shell chariot drawn by the snow white swans. Beautiful white doves were her messengers and her head was always wreathed with roses and myrtles.”

THE SON OF THE EVENING STAR

“You shall hear a tale of wonder,
Hear the story of Osseo,
Son of the Evening Star, Osseo!

“Once, in days no more remembered,
Ages nearer the beginning,
When the heavens were closer to us,
And the Gods were more familiar,
In the North-land lived a hunter
With ten young and comely daughters,
Tall and lithe as wands of willow;
Only Oweenee, the youngest,
She the wilful and the wayward,
She the silent, dreamy maiden,
Was the fairest of the sisters.

“All these women married warriors,
Married brave and haughty husbands;
Only Oweenee, the youngest,
Laughed and flouted all her lovers,
All her young and handsome suitors,
And then married old Osseo,
Old Osseo, poor and ugly,
Broken with age and weak with coughing,
Always coughing like a squirrel.

“Ah, but beautiful within him
Was the spirit of Osseo,
From the Evening Star descended,
Star of Evening, Star of Woman,

Star of tenderness and passion!
All its fire was in his bosom,
All its beauty in his spirit,
All its mystery in his being,
All its splendor in his language!

“And her lovers, the rejected,
Handsome men with belts of wampum,
Handsome men with paint and feathers,
Pointed at her in derision,
Followed her with jest and laughter.
But she said: ‘I care not for you,
Care not for your belts of wampum,
Care not for your paint and feathers,
Care not for your jests and laughter;
I am happy with Osseo!’

“Once to some great feast invited,
Through the damp and dusk of evening,
Walked together the ten sisters,
Walked together with their husbands;
Slowly followed old Osseo,
With fair Oweenee beside him;
All the others chatted gayly,
These two only walked in silence.

“At the western sky Osseo
Gazed intent, as if imploring,
Often stopped and gazed, imploring,
At the trembling Star of Evening,
At the tender Star of Woman;
And they heard him murmur softly,
‘Ah, showain nemeshin, Nosa!
Pity, pity me, my father!’

“‘Listen!’ said the eldest sister,
‘He is praying to his father!
What a pity that the old man
Does not stumble in the pathway,

Does not break his neck by falling!
And they laughed till all the forest
Rang with their unseemly laughter.

“On their pathway through the woodlands
Lay an oak, by storms uprooted,
Lay the great trunk of an oak tree,
Buried half in leaves and mosses,
Mouldering, crumbling, huge, and hollow.
And Osseo, when he saw it,
Gave a shout, a cry of anguish,
Leaped into its yawning cavern,
At one end went in an old man,
Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly;
From the other came a young man,
Tall and straight and strong and handsome.

“Thus Osseo was transfigured,
Thus restored to youth and beauty;
But, alas for good Osseo,
And for Oweenee, the faithful!
Strangely, too, was she transfigured.
Changed into a weak old woman;
With a staff she tottered onward,
Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly!
And the sisters and their husbands
Laughed until the echoing forest
Rang with their unseemly laughter.

“But Osseo turned not from her,
Walked with slower step beside her.
Took her hand, as brown and withered
As an oak-leaf is in winter,
Called her sweetheart, Nenemoosha,
Soothed her with soft words of kindness,
Till they reached the lodge of feasting,
Till they sat down in the wigwam,
Sacred to the Star of Evening,

To the tender Star of Woman.

“Wrapt in visions, lost in dreaming,
At the banquet sat Osseo;
All were merry, all were happy,
All were joyous but Osseo.
Neither food nor drink he tasted,
Neither did he speak nor listen,
But as one bewildered sat he,
Looking dreamily and sadly,
First at Oweenee, then upward
At the gleaming sky above them.

“Then a voice was heard, a whisper,
Coming from the starry distance,
Coming from the empty vastness,
Low, and musical, and tender;
And the voice said: ‘O Osseo!

O my son, my best beloved!
Broken are the spells that bound you,
All the charms of the magicians,
All the magic powers of evil;
Come to me; ascend, Osseo!

“‘Taste the food that stands before you:
It is blessed and enchanted,
It has magic virtues in it,
It will change you to a spirit.
All your bowls and all your kettles
Shall be wood and clay no longer;
But the bowls be changed to wampum,
And the kettles shall be silver;
They shall shine like shells of scarlet,
Like the fire shall gleam and glimmer.

“‘And the women shall no longer
Bear the dreary doom of labor,
But be changed to birds, and glisten
With the beauty of the starlight,

Painted with the dusky splendors
Of the skies and clouds of evening!

“What Osseo heard as whispers,
What as words he comprehended,
Was but music to the others,
Music as of birds afar off,
Of the whip-poor-will afar off,
Of the lonely Wawonaissa
Singing in the darksome forest.

“Then the lodge began to tremble,
Straight began to shake and tremble,
And they felt it rising, rising,
Slowly through the air ascending,
From the darkness of the tree-tops
Forth into the dewy starlight,
Till it passed the topmost branches;
And behold! the wooden dishes
All were changed to shells of scarlet!
And behold! the earthen kettles
All were changed to bowls of silver!
And the roof-poles of the wigwam
Were as glittering rods of silver,
And the roof of bark upon them
As the shining shards of beetles.

“Then Osseo gazed around him,
And he saw the nine fair sisters.
All the sisters and their husbands,
Changed to birds of various plumage.
Some were jays and some were magpies,
Others thrushes, others blackbirds;
And they hopped, and sang, and twittered,
Perked and fluttered all their feathers,
Strutted in their shining plumage,
And their tails like fans unfolded.

“Only Oweenee, the youngest,

Was not changed, but sat in silence,
Wasted, wrinkled, old, and ugly,
Looking sadly at the others;
Till Osseo, gazing upward,
Gave another cry of anguish,
Such a cry as he had uttered
By the oak-tree in the forest.

“Then returned her youth and beauty,
And her soiled and tattered garments
Were transformed to robes of ermine,
And her staff became a feather,
Yes, a shining silver feather!

“And again the wigwam trembled,
Swayed and rushed through airy currents,
Through transparent cloud and vapor,
And amid celestial splendors
On the Evening Star alighted,
As a snow-flake falls on snow-flake,
As a leaf drops on a river,
As the thistle-down on water.

“Forth with cheerful words of welcome
Came the father of Osseo,
He with radiant locks of silver,
He with eyes serene and tender.
And he said: ‘My son, Osseo,
Hang the cage of birds you bring there,
Hang the cage with rods of silver,
And the birds with glistening feathers,
At the doorway of my wigwam.’

“At the door he hung the bird-cage,
And they entered in and gladly
Listened to Osseo’s father,
Ruler of the Star of Evening,
As he said: ‘O my Osseo!
I have had compassion on you,

Given you back your youth and beauty,
Into birds of various plumage
Changed your sisters and their husbands;
Changed them thus because they mocked you
In the figure of the old man,
In that aspect sad and wrinkled,
Could not see your heart of passion,
Could not see your youth immortal;
Only Oweenee, the faithful,
Saw your naked heart and loved you.

“‘In the lodge that glimmers yonder,
In the little star that twinkles
Through the vapors, on the left hand,
Lives the envious Evil Spirit,
The Wabeno, the magician,
Who transformed you to an old man.
Take heed lest his beams fall on you,
For the rays he darts around him
Are the power of his enchantment,
Are the arrows that he uses.’

“Many years, in peace and quiet,
On the peaceful Star of Evening
Dwelt Osseo with his father;
Many years, in song and flutter,
At the doorway of the wigwam,
Hung the cage with rods of silver,
And fair Oweenee, the faithful.
Bore a son unto Osseo,
With the beauty of his mother,
With the courage of his father.

“And the boy grew up and prospered,
And Osseo, to delight him,
Made him little bows and arrows,
Opened the great cage of silver,
And let loose his aunts and uncles,

All those birds with glossy feathers,
For his little son to shoot at.

“Round and round they wheeled and darted,
Filled the Evening Star with music,
With their songs of joy and freedom;
Filled the Evening Star with splendor,
With the fluttering of their plumage;
Till the boy, the little hunter,
Bent his bow and shot an arrow,
Shot a swift and fatal arrow,
And a bird, with shining feather,
At his feet fell wounded sorely.

“But, O wondrous transformation!
T’was no bird he saw before him.
T’was a beautiful young woman,
With the arrow in her bosom!

“When her blood fell on the planet,
On the sacred Star of Evening,
Broken was the spell of magic,
Powerless was the strange enchantment,
And the youth, the fearless bowman,
Suddenly felt himself descending
Held by unseen hands, but sinking
Downward through the empty spaces,
Downward through the clouds and vapors,
Till he rested on an island,
On an island, green and grassy,
Yonder in the Big-Sea-Water.

“After him he saw descending
All the birds with shining feathers,
Fluttering, falling, wafted downward,
Like the painted leaves of Autumn;
And the lodge with poles of silver,
With its roof like wings of beetles,
Like the shining shards of beetles,

By the winds of heaven uplifted,
Slowly sank upon the island,
Bringing back the good Osseo,
Bringing Oweenee, the faithful.

“Then the birds, again transfigured,
Reassumed the shape of mortals,
Took their shape, but not their stature,
They remained as Little People,
Like the pygmies, the Puk-Wudjies,
And on pleasant nights of Summer,
When the Evening Star was shining,
Hand in hand they danced together
On the island’s craggy headlands,
On the sand-beach low and level.

“Still their glittering lodge is seen there,
On the tranquil Summer evenings,
And upon the shore the fisher
Sometimes hears their happy voices,
Sees them dancing in the starlight!”

—*From “The Song of Hiawatha.”*

THE STAR THAT BECAME A LILY

Once a beautiful star came down to earth. For a long time it had watched the children at play in the green fields, and the star said, “I love those little Red children, I would like to go down and live with them.”

So one night the star shot down, down, till at last it stood out upon a big plain. The people in the wigwam saw it, and ran to look at it.

“I have come, O good people,” said the star. “to dwell with you on the earth. I love to watch you in your wigwams. I love to see you make your birch canoes. I love to watch your children

at their play. Tell me, then, where I may dwell. It must be where I can see you all, and where at night I can look up to my home in the skies."

Then one chief said, "Dwell here upon the mountain top; where you can overlook the plain. The clouds will come down and rest upon the high peaks, and each morning you may greet the sun."

"Dwell here upon the hillsides," said another chief, "for there the flowers grow brightest and the sun is warmest."

"Dwell in the forests," said a third chief. "for there the sweet violets grow, and the air is cool, and the smell of spruce is in the air."

But the star thought the mountain was too far away, as it could not see the children from such a height, and it was there it wanted to be near. The hillside, too, the star thought, was far away, and the forest, it was sure, was too dark and dreary.

But one day the star saw a beautiful little lake. The water was very clear,—one could see the skies and the clouds in it. At night the stars shone down into its waters. The water was soft and warm, and the star was pleased to see it ripple and dance. It liked to see the sunlight glimmer on the waters. The children loved the lake, too; they played all day on its banks, and often paddled out upon it with their little canoes.

"I will dwell right here," the star said, "for then I can be near the children."

And so, when the sun had set, the star floated down upon the waters. It sent its rays away down beneath the waters; and the Red children thought these rays took root, for the very next

morning there was a beautiful lily upon the waters. Its roots reached away down into the rich earth, its petals were pure white, and it had a heart of rich yellow gold.

"No flower has a perfume so sweet," the children cried.

Then they rowed out to look at it.

"It is the star," the children said, "it will dwell with us forever, and we will call it the Lily Star."

Then the children rowed back to the shore. They did not pluck the lily, but each morning they went to see it.

"Dear, beautiful lily!" they would say.

By and by it opened wide its petals, and the air was filled with sweetness.

Then other lilies grew up around it; and after a time these Water Lilies, or Lily Stars, as the children called them, were floating on the waters of the lakes everywhere.

—*Dorothy Brooks.*

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